



This 1812 stone arch bridge stood until mid-twentieth century on Pa. 116 in Adams County. Lee's troops passed over it in their retreat from Gettysburg.

AMONG the states of this nation, Pennsylvania not only is outstanding for its present network of highways—including the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the Keystone Shortway—but it has played a prime role in the development of American roads. This role, which antedates both the invention of the automobile and America's founding as a nation, has been strengthened by Pennsylvania's strategic location as a gateway between the more settled East and the developing West.

Pennsylvania's first roads were the paths which the Indians made and traveled. After the European arrived and as settlement advanced, many of the old paths were widened, first for the white man's pack trains and then for his wagons.

In 1681 King Charles II granted a charter to William Penn creating the Province of Pennsylvania. As early as July 11 of that year, an agreement in England between Penn and various purchasers of land in the new Province stipulated that "Great roads from City to City not to contain less than forty feet in breadth shall be first laid out and declared to be for highways . . ." An act of the General Assembly on March 10, 1683, ordered each county court to appoint overseers every September to "summon . . . inhabitants . . . to Come in and Work at the Making of all highways and bridges . . ." By an

act dated May 20, 1699, the justices of the county courts could provide for the laying out of "land roads or cartways," but all "king's highways or public roads" were to be laid out upon orders from the governor and Council.

Until the mid-eighteenth century it was the roads in southeastern Pennsylvania that received major attention. Goods could be transported by wagon in the eastern part of the Province, but west of Lancaster or (later) Carlisle the roads were generally inadequate. Goods for the "back country" were transferred to pack horse trains, usually of twelve to fifteen horses each. This greatly increased the cost of both imports and exports, and it was inevitable that the westward push of settlement would bring pressure for better roads in this region. There was, however, another factor, the military needs arising from the French and Indian War (1754-1763).

The first wagon road in western Pennsylvania was opened in 1752 from what is now Cumberland, Maryland, to the Youghiogheny River. In 1755 it was improved and extended to the Monongahela River by several hundred troops of the British General Edward Braddock, and thereafter it was known as Braddock's Road. The main force of the General's army then set out with its artillery and supplies over the rough roadway; its aim was to capture Fort Duquesne,

recently erected by the French at the Forks of the Ohio where Pittsburgh now stands. Only a few miles from its objective, on July 9, 1755, the army suffered a disastrous defeat and Braddock himself was killed.

Another road, from Shippensburg to the summit of the Allegheny Ridge, had been opened in 1755 under the supervision of James Burd. Three years later, troops under Brigadier General John Forbes reopened it to near Bedford and from there opened a road along the Indians' Raystown Path to about ten miles west of Ligonier. Known as Forbes Road, this route was used by the General's troops in a new effort to take Fort Duquesne. They arrived on the scene November 25, 1758, one day after the French had blown up the fort and abandoned it. During the remainder of the war, Forbes Road and other routes were maintained by the British forces to transport military supplies, but with the coming of peace they were allowed to deteriorate.

Between the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 and the close of the Revolution in 1783, some new roads were opened, but improvement was slow. In 1778 the Supreme Executive Council of the new State, taking note of complaints about the ruinous condition of many roads, ordered that the supervisors of roads and highways repair them or be prosecuted.

By the mid-1780's the tide was beginning to turn. On September 21, 1785, noting that "no state highway hath been heretofore laid out by public authority between the western parts of the county of Cumberland and the town of Pittsburgh," the General Assembly enacted legislation providing £2,000 for such a road. Following in part the route of the old Forbes Road, this Pennsylvania Road (as it was called) was finally completed in 1818. It became a main route for settlers and others traveling west into the Ohio Valley, and a century later it became the approximate route of the Lincoln Highway (U.S. 30).

In 1792 construction began in northern Pennsylvania on the famous Williamson Road. This was named after the land agent Charles Williamson, who had bought more than a million acres in Pennsylvania and New York state and wished to open them to settlement. During the

Rates of Toll on the Cumberland road in Pennsylvania.

Every score of Sheep, Six Cents
 " " " Hogs, " "
 " " " Cattle, Twelve
 " " " Horse and rider, Four
 Every led or drove Horse, Mule or Ass,
 " Sled or Sleigh, drawn by horse or pair
 of Oxen, Three Cents.
 " Horse or pair of Oxen in addition, Six cents.
 " Dearborn, Sulkey Chair or Chaise
 with one horse, Six cents.
 " Horse in addition, Three cents.
 Every Chariot, Coach, Coachet, Stage Pha-
 eton, or Chaise, with two horses and four
 wheels, Twelve Cents.
 " other carriage with four horses, eighteen cents
 Every other carriage of pleasure, by what-
 ever name it may be called, the same, ac-
 cording to the number of wheels and
 horses drawing the same.
 Every cart or wagon, whose wheels do
 not exceed three inches in breadth drawn
 by one horse or pair of oxen, Four cents
 " Horse in addition, Three cents.
 Every cart or wagon whose wheels exceed
 three inches and does not exceed four inches
 in breadth for every horse or pair of
 oxen drawing the same.
 Every cart or wagon whose wheels exceed
 four inches and do not exceed five inches
 in breadth, for every horse or pair of oxen
 drawing the same, Three cents.
 Every cart or wagon whose wheels exceed
 six inches and do not exceed eight in-
 ches in breadth for every horse
 drawing the same, Two cents.
 All carts or wagons whose wheels
 exceed eight inches in breadth,
FREE.
 Any person refusing or neglecting to
 pay toll a fine of

*Toll sign from the National Road, West Alex-
 ander tollhouse near the West Virginia line.*

next four years, at his direction, this road was built through the wilderness from Trout Run to Lawrenceville—on at least one occasion the builders faced starvation until supplies reached them. After the road's completion in 1796 it became a key route for emigration into the northern country, and today U.S. 15 follows its general course.

The main road from Philadelphia to Lancaster, today in part the Conestoga Road east of Paoli and the King's Highway (Pa. 340) west of Downingtown, had proven inadequate. On April 9, 1792, however, the General Assembly incorporated the first private turnpike company in the United States to build the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike Road—135 years later an important segment of U.S. 30. Construction of the sixty-two-mile road began late that year and was completed some two years later at a cost of \$464,000—less than half of what an average mile of superhighway costs today. It was built of broken limestone and of gravel of different sizes,

compacted and made firm by traffic. Later, after the success in England of a process called macadamizing, the road was relaid with crushed stone. The turnpike pointed the way for other turnpike companies in Pennsylvania and neighboring states.

Maps of the period show that the toll roads were most numerous in older and more populous areas of the State, whereas even the most important highways in the great north-central portion of Pennsylvania were generally "common roads," maintained by State and local authorities. In 1831, as Pennsylvania's turnpike movement was reaching its peak, there were 220 companies with approximately 2,400 miles in use.

The early nineteenth century also witnessed the construction by the federal government of the National Road. This highway was authorized by Congress in 1806 to facilitate transportation between the seaboard and the fast-developing West. The road began at Cumberland, Maryland—thus earning the additional title of "Cumberland Road"—spanned the Ohio River at Wheeling and continued to Illinois. As first projected the road was to pass through only a very small portion of this State, but Pennsylvania politicians succeeded in having it moved northward to pass through Uniontown and Washington.



Addison tollhouse on the National Road (now U.S. 40) in Somerset County.

Construction of the twenty-foot macadamized road proceeded slowly, however, and it was not until 1818 that the Ohio River was reached. In 1822 President Monroe refused to sign legislation for its repair, holding it unconstitutional. Although other appropriations for this purpose were approved thereafter, the funds generally were inadequate and the condition of the road declined. Finally the states agreed in 1835 to take over their portions. Thenceforth, toll was charged at six tollhouses in Pennsylvania, with different rates for various types of vehicles, animals, and pedestrians. Today this route forms a part of transcontinental U.S. 40.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, wagoning (also called freighting) accounted for the greater part of intersectional trade in Pennsylvania, although individual travel on horseback remained common (even for long distances on improved roads) until the advent of the railroads. Some heavily loaded wagons traveled great distances. Mr. Fortescue Cuming, journeying westward in 1807, met near Shippensburg two wagons from Zanesville, Ohio, each drawn by six horses and bound for Philadelphia; they had been a month on the road. Emigrants traveling west and livestock constituted two other important users during this period. Cuming met

... families removing further back into the country, some with cows, oxen, horses, sheep, and hogs, and all their farming implements and domestick utensils, and some without; some with wagons; some with carts and some on foot, according to their abilities.

A vehicle of prime importance both in freighting and in the immigrant traffic was the Cone-stoga wagon, first developed about 1750 and built by Lancaster County artisans well into the nineteenth century. Also significant for passenger travel were stagecoaches, each generally drawn by four horses. The coaches varied somewhat in size and design, with one type accommodating about twelve passengers on four wooden benches arranged crosswise. As early as 1784 a stage line began operations between Philadelphia and Lancaster, and by 1804 had reached Pittsburgh via Lancaster, Harrisburg, Carlisle, Bedford, and Greensburg. The trip required six or seven days and the fare was twenty dollars;



A stagecoach stops at the Logan House, an inn in Tyrone.

this service was partially subsidized through a contract for carrying the United States mail. For several years before and after 1835, when stagecoaching was at its height, two four-horse stages passed each way daily over the Pittsburgh Pike; on the National Road, where competition between rival lines was intense, eight stages daily transported passengers and mail.

Adding to the picturesque character of many roads, especially the main thoroughfares, were the taverns. The Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike was reputed to have one for every mile of road, and on the National Road they apparently were almost as numerous. These inns tended to be of three types—catering respectively to stagecoach riders, wagoners, and drovers of livestock—with prices and accommodations varying in relation to their trade.

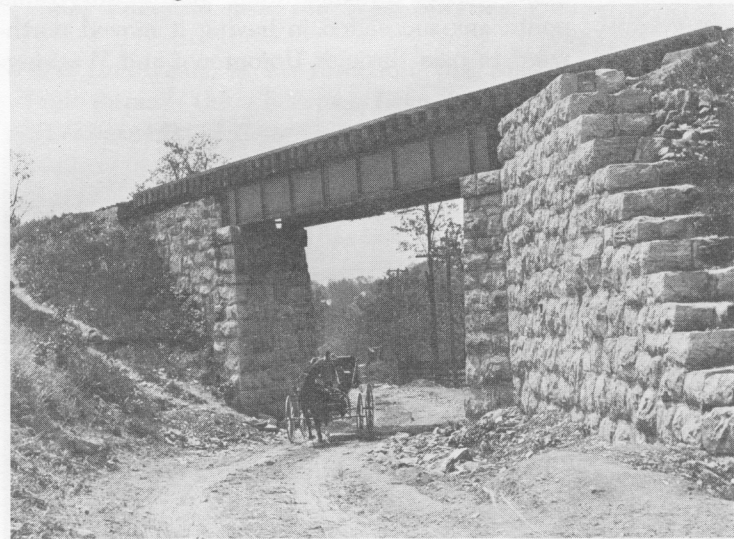
Most roads, particularly local, were not so much built as simply cleared, with perhaps a little digging on the sides of hills or the erection of crude wooden bridges over smaller streams. Plank roads, made of heavy wooden boards laid across the road, were built around 1850, but proved too expensive to maintain. The best roads were generally the turnpikes and other main thoroughfares that were macadamized—graded and surfaced with stone and gravel—and indeed some roads on which toll was not charged came erroneously to be called turnpikes simply because they were improved in this manner.

The dominance of roads in Pennsylvania's inland transportation was first seriously challenged by the canal building which took place on a

large scale during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. This dominance was conclusively ended by an even more formidable competitor, the iron horse. For long-distance and intercity transportation of both passengers and freight, people turned from the old highways to the mighty steam railroads and, by the last decade of the century, to electric trolley-car lines as well.

The rural farm-to-market roads, unpaved to begin with and under local government jurisdiction, suffered relatively little. It was what had been the better roads—the main through routes, and especially the turnpikes—that felt the most devastating effect. Increasingly, these roads yielded insufficient revenue to permit proper maintenance and many of them fell into serious disrepair.

Thus it appeared that roads had become the inevitable victims of progress in the form of the railroad. But, as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, developments occurred which were to dramatically turn the tables. Progress in a new form—that of the automobile—was to put the State's highways once more on the center stage of the transportation scene.



The Ringgold Road, now Pa. 997, passes beneath the Western Maryland Railroad between Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, and Ringgold, Maryland.